

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated December 5, 2006. Claims 1, 2, 5 to 8, 10 to 21, 25, 28 to 31, 33 to 44, 51, 52, 101, 102, 106, 112 and 113 are pending in the application, with Claims 3, 4, 9, 26, 27 and 32 having been canceled herein. Claims 1, 2, 25, 51 and 52 are the independent claims herein. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 7 to 15, 25, 27, 30, 31, 34 to 38, 42, 43, 51, 52, 101, 102, 106, 112 and 113 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,023,345 (Bloomfield) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,157,706 (Rachelson). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

The present invention relates to communication between devices that can transmit/receive e-mail in which image data is attached to the e-mail. According to the invention, when e-mail is to be sent with image data attached thereto, the image data is converted in one of three ways. First, a determination is made of a format of the image data corresponding to a designated destination address by referring to a database. If the destination address is stored in the database with the format, then the image data is converted accordingly. Second, if the format is not stored in the database with the destination address, then communication is performed with the destination device to obtain functional information of the format, and the image data is converted accordingly if the functional information is obtained. However, if the functional information is not obtained during the communication, then a third type of conversion is performed in which the image data is converted into a baseline format that the destination device is able to process. As a result, the image data being transmitted by email can be formatted properly for the

destination device to better ensure that the image data can be viewed at the destination device.

Referring specifically to the claims, amended independent Claim 1 is a communication apparatus for transmitting electronic mail data by connecting to the Internet, the apparatus comprising designation means for designating a destination address, determination means for determining a format of image data in correspondence with the designated destination address by referring to a database, in a case where transmission of the electronic mail data with the image data attached thereto is performed, communication means for performing communication with a destination device to obtain functional information of the format of the image data, in a case where the functional information of the format of the image data in correspondence with the designated destination address is not stored in the database, before the transmission of the electronic mail data is performed, converting means for converting the image data into the format determined by the determination means in a case where the functional information of the format of the image data is stored in the database, for converting the image data into the format based on the functional information obtained by the communication means in a case where the functional information of the format of the image data has been obtained in the communication performed by the communication means, and for converting the image data into a baseline format which the destination device is able to process in a case where the functional information of the format of the image data is not obtained in the communication performed by the communication means, and transmission means for transmitting the electronic mail data with the image data which is converted by the converting means.

Independent Claims 51 and 52 are method and system claims, respectively, that correspond generally to Claim 1.

Amended independent Claim 2 includes features along the lines of Claim 1, but more specifically is a communication apparatus comprising designation means for designating a destination address, first connecting means for connecting to a local area network and second connecting means for connecting to a wide area network, first communicating means for communicating electronic mail data by connecting to the Internet by one of the first and second connecting means, second communicating means for performing facsimile communication by connecting to the wide area network by the second connecting means, determination means for determining a format of image data in correspondence with the designated destination address by referring to a database, in a case where transmission of the electronic mail data with the image data attached thereto is performed, control means for controlling the first communication means so as to perform communication with a destination device to obtain functional information of the format of the image data, in a case where the functional information of the format of the image data in correspondence with the designated destination address is not stored in the database, before the transmission of the electronic mail data is performed, converting means for converting the image data into the format determined by the determination means in a case where the functional information of the format of the image data is stored in the database, for converting the image data into the format based on the functional information obtained by the control means in a case where the functional information of the format of the image data has been obtained in the communication controlled by the control means, and for converting the image data into a baseline format which the destination device is able to process in a case where the functional information of the format of the image data is not

obtained in the communication controlled by the control means, and transmission means for transmitting the electronic mail data with the image data which is converted by the converting means.

Independent Claim 25 is a computer-readable storage medium claim that corresponds generally to Claim 2.

The applied references, alone or in any permissible combination, are not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of independent Claims 1, 2, 25, 51 and 52, and in particular, are not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the features of determining a format of image data in correspondence with a designated destination address by referring to a database, in a case where transmission of the electronic mail data with the image data attached thereto is to be performed, performing communication with a destination device to obtain functional information of the format of image data, in a case where the functional information of the format of the image data in correspondence with a designated destination address is not stored in a database, before the transmission of the electronic mail data is performed, and then converting the image data by either 1) converting the image data into the format determined by the determination means/step in a case where the functional information of the format of the image data is stored in the database, 2) converting the image data into the format based on the functional information obtained by the communication means/step in a case where the functional information of the format of the image data has been obtained in the communication performed by the communication means, or 3) converting the image data into a baseline format which the destination device is able to process in a case where the functional information of the format of the image data is not obtained in the communication performed by the communication means/step.

Bloomfield discloses transmitting FAX data received from a FAX device 106 to an E-mail device. The FAX data is converted into E-mail data by a FEM-gateway 104. A FAX server 110 of the FEM-gateway 104 converts the FAX data received from the FAX device 106 into a pre-selected industry-standard format, as selected by the administrator of the FEM-gateway 104 (col. 7, lines 8 to 13). That is, in Bloomfield, the FAX data is converted into the format pre-selected by the administrator. Therefore, the conversion process of Bloomfield may, at best, be seen to correspond to the conversion process number 3 above (i.e., converting into a standard). Bloomfield, however, does not store function information in correspondence with a destination address. Thus, Bloomfield cannot perform the conversion number 1 of the invention. Moreover, Bloomfield does not disclose performing communication with the destination device to obtain function information of the destination device so that the conversion number 2 of the invention can be performed. Thus, Bloomfield fails to teach the above-features of the invention.

Rachelson is merely seen to disclose that a recipient indicates a format preference via an e-mail command system in advance (S0). A facsimile message is converted into the indicated format (S32) and is sent via the Internet (S34). On the other hand, if the recipient does not indicate the format preference, the facsimile message is converted into a TIF format (S33) (col. 11, lines 21 to 38). Therefore, the processes of Rachelson may, at best, be seen to correspond to conversion numbers 1 and 3 of the invention. However, Rachelson, like Bloomfield, fails to obtain the functional information from the destination device and therefore also cannot perform the conversion number 2 of the invention.

Accordingly, independent Claims 1, 2, 25, 51 and 52, as well as the claims dependent therefrom, are believed to be allowable.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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